



News Release

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Update: Willow Beach NFH to Suspend Rainbow Trout Stocking Program in FY 2014

Due to the failure of the water delivery system and the devastating loss of rainbow trout that resulted in August and then again in November, the Fish and Wildlife Service's Willow Beach National Fish Hatchery (NFH) has suspended its recreational stocking program. The hatchery itself will not be closing, although it will not be able to continue with its rainbow trout production.

The latest incident took place on November 21 when the elevation in Lake Mohave was low enough to starve the rainbow trout production water pumps at the hatchery. Water flow was lost to six raceways holding the trout. Three of the six raceways under production were loaded lightly enough that they did not have any fish losses at the time the issue was noted. Staff were able to pull screens to release live fish from these raceways, where they were then drained into Lake Mohave, saving 11,105 fish weighing a total of 7,782 pounds. Unfortunately, the three other raceways were lost and no fish survived. The total loss for those raceways was 20,880 fish, weighing a total of 13,420 pounds.

Willow Beach NFH historically stocked trout into the Colorado River adjacent to the hatchery (Lake Mohave) and below Davis Dam. In addition to these trout, Willow Beach stocked three tribal areas in the lower Colorado River for the Colorado River Indian Tribes, the Quechan Tribe, and the Fort Mohave Indian Tribe. The most recent loss of rainbow trout from the failed intake pipeline resulted in the loss of fish destined for the CRIT and Quechan tribal sites. These sites were due to be stocked immediately but the fish could not be saved when the raceways went dry. In order to fulfill its commitment to the tribes, the Service has been able to find a very limited number of rainbow trout for these individual stockings.

The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. We are both a leader and trusted partner in fish and wildlife conservation, known for our scientific excellence, stewardship of lands and natural resources, dedicated professionals and commitment to public service. For more information on our work and the people who make it happen, visit www.fws.gov.